

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-14 ACDA-19 DPW-01

DRC-01 /110 W

----- 129902

O P 160545Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8382

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL AUCKLAND

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 2239

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, NZ, US, VS

SUBJECT: FORMER NZ SOLDIER ALLEGES PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN
KILLING AMERICANS IN VIETNAM

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL STATING HE
HAD BEEN NZ SOLDIER IN VIETNAM CALLED RADIO TALKBACK
SHOW IN AUCKLAND TODAY WITH INFORMATION THAT HE AND
OTHER NZ SOLDIERS TWO YEARS AGO KILLED SIX US SOLDIERS IN SOUTH
VIETNAM AND BURIED THEIR BODIES. TALKBACK SHOW
MODERATOR, GORDON DRYDEN, BELIEVED TO KNOW NAME OF
INDIVIDUAL AND IS FLYING TO WELLINGTON TO DISCUSS
MATTER WITH MINISTER DEFENCE FAULKNER.
END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY HAS NOT YET OBTAINED TRANSCRIPT OF PROGRAM
BUT ACCORDING VARIOUS SOURCES INDIVIDUAL CALLED AUCKLAND'S
RADIO I SHORTLY BEFORE NOON TODAY. HE INDICATED HE HAD
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BEEN WITH NZ CONTINGENT IN VIETNAM. HE AND SEVERAL OTHER

NEW ZEALANDERS CAME ACROSS GROUP OF SIX US SOLDIERS TORTURING VIETNAM CIVILIANS. AFTER OBSERVING FROM COVER FOR A SHORT WHILE, MEMBER OF NZ GROUP STEPPED OUT INTO SIGHT OF US TROOPS. ONE AMERICAN MADE WHAT WAS TAKEN TO BE THREATENING MOVE AT WHICH TIME NEW ZEALAND SOLDIERS OPENED FIRE AND KILLED THE AMERICANS. BODIES WERE BURIED AND NO FURTHER REPORT MADE. INDIVIDUAL STATED HE COMING FORTH WITH INFORMATION AT THIS TIME DUE TO TROUBLES WITH HIS CONSCIENCE.

3. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT DRYDEN HAS NAME OF INDIVIDUAL WHO CALLED AND IS COMING TO WELLINGTON TODAY TO SEE MIN. DEFENCE FAULKNER. DRYDEN SUPPOSEDLY WILL TRY TO MAKE DEAL EXCHANGING NAME OF INDIVIDUAL IN RETURN FOR ASSURANCE OF FREEDOM FROM PROSECUTION.

4. DURING CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY OF DEFENCE JOHN ROBERTSON AFTER FOREGOING WAS DRAFTED, ROBERTSON TOLD EMBASSY THAT FAULKNER HAD NO LEGAL AUTHORITY TO GRANT ANY KIND OF IMMUNITY TO SOLIDER WHO HAS CONFESSED ALLEGED CRIME. GNZ POSITION WAS THAT FULL INVESTIGATION OF FACTS WOULD BE MADE, FOLLOWING WHICH THE LAW WOULD HAVE TO RUN ITS COURSE IF CRIMES HAD BEEN COMMITTED. GNZ WOULD PLAY THE MATTER IN AS LOW A KEY AS POSSIBLE, IN PART BECAUSE IT WISHED TO AVOID GIVING NATIONAL PUBLICITY TO A PARTICULAR RADIO SHOW. ROBERTSON SAID HE REALIZED THAT THIS REMARK COULD BE TAKEN TO IMPLY THAT ALLEGED KILLINGS OF AMERICAN SOLIDERS IN VIETNAM WAS SOME KIND OF A HOAX. IN FACT, HE ADDED, THERE WAS NO TELLING AT THIS POINT WHETHER STORY WAS TRUE OR NOT. BUT GNZ WOULD INVESTIGATE CASE VERY CAREFULLY AND KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EMBASSY. SELDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, MURDER, RADIO BROADCASTING, INFORMANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974WELLIN02239
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740189-1198
From: WELLINGTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740743/aaaabkxc.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 JUL 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <27 MAR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FORMER NZ SOLDIER ALLEGES PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN KILLING AMERICANS IN VIETNAM
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, NZ, US, VS, (DRYDEN, GORDON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005